

26. SIGHT RECORD OF THE LITTLE PIED FLYCATCHER
FICEDULA WESTERMANNI SHARPE IN ANDHRA PRADESH

Pittie (1986) reported the first sighting of the little pied flycatcher *Ficedula westermanni* Sharpe from the Narsapur forest (17° 45' N & 78° 17' E) in Andhra Pradesh. On Nov. 10, 1997, while birding on the Gundla Brahmeshwaram Plateau (Eastern Ghats, at 775 m above msl) in the Gundla Brahmeshwaram Metta Wildlife Sanctuary located south of the Nagarjunasagar-Srisailem Tiger Reserve (15° 53'-16° 42' N; 78° 30'-79° 28' E), I saw a small bird with black upper plumage and white underparts, white wing patch, a long, broad, white supercilium and the sides of tail white near the base. The bird was later identified as the little pied flycatcher. The specimen could not be photographed as my colleague with the camera was some distance away and by the time he reached the site the bird had disappeared!

According to Ali and Ripley (1983), this species winters up to Surguja and is a frequent visitor along well-wooded streams. Earlier records in Andhra Pradesh are also along a well-

wooded stream (Pittie *pers. comm.*). The individual I sighted was on a teak (*Tectona grandis*) tree near the Forest Rest House about 150 m from the Gundlakama river that originates a short distance away.

Prabhakar *et al.* (1994) reported its presence in the Western Ghats, particularly from the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve. The bird recorded by me was most likely a winter vagrant and a new record of the species for the Eastern Ghats in Andhra Pradesh.

I thank Mr. Aasheesh Pittie of the Birdwatchers Society of Andhra Pradesh for encouragement and the CSIR, New Delhi for a fellowship.

July 5, 2000

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27. BLUE-THROATED FLYCATCHER *CYORNIS RUBECULOIDES*
VIGORS IN THE THAR DESERT

On October 6, 1999 at Kishangarh, Jaisalmer district near the Indo-Pak border, we noticed a flycatcher in a *Prosopis chilensis* tree at the Border Security Force (BSF) outpost. The bird (not more than 3 m away) was immediately recognized as a male blue-throated flycatcher *Cyornis rubeculoides* Vigors. It was making typical aerial sorties to swoop on insects, returning each time to a different perch. We

observed and photographed it over a period of two hours from 1450 to 1700 hrs.

The bird was an adult male with dark blue upperparts including exposed portions of wings and tail. A contrasting azure patch was quite prominent on the lesser wing-coverts. The forecrown, ear coverts and throat were dark blue. The throat looked almost black when the bird was perched in the shade. Demarcation of the

blue throat from the orange-rufous breast and pectoral region was distinct. The belly and vent were white, washed with buff. The bill was black with visible rectal bristles.

According to Ali and Ripley (1996) it winters in scattered areas, in the hills of southern India to Belgaum southwards to Kerala, Tamil Nadu, the Eastern Ghats, Bihar, Orissa, West Bengal, the plains and foothills of Bangladesh and southern parts of Sri Lanka. Grimmett *et al.* (1998) describe the distribution and status as breeding in the Himalayan foothills from Pakistan (Margalla hills) east to Arunachal Pradesh, and northeast India, wintering in East Himalayan foothills, south to Bangladesh, southwest India and Sri Lanka, with scattered records from elsewhere in India. Both these works do not record the species from the Thar

desert and Rajasthan. However, there is one recent record from Rajasthan (Robson 1997). A blue-throated flycatcher was recorded by Paul Holt at Bharatpur in February 1996. Our sighting at Kishangarh constitutes the first record of the species from the Thar desert and the second from Rajasthan.

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28. UNUSUAL BEHAVIOUR OF PURPLE SUNBIRD *NECTARINIA ASIATICA*

On a routine visit to the Lingambudhi lake and its surroundings, I happened to witness unusual activity of the purple sunbird *Nectarinia asiatica* (Latham).

The purple sunbird, in breeding plumage, was perched on an *Acacia leucophloea* tree. On the same branch, a small bee-eater *Merops orientalis* Latham was also present at a distance of about half a metre. Both were simultaneously taking off, presumably after invisible insects, and occupying the same place after every sortie. After some sorties, the sunbird sat by the side of the bee-eater and started picking up something from the rump and under tail of the bee-eater. I could not make out what the sunbird was pecking at. This continued for 5-6 minutes.

Then the sunbird started pulling the tail feathers of the bee-eater. The disturbed bee-eater

now showed its unhappiness by turning its head towards the sunbird and opening its beak as if to scare it away. This action prompted the sunbird to move off the branch, but it continued pulling at the tail feathers by hovering over the bee-eater.

The bee-eater changed its position to avoid this annoyance, but the sunbird would not relent. Unable to withstand the continued disturbance, the bee-eater chased the sunbird out of my view.

July 10, 2000 A. SHIVAPRAKASH
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